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TAGS: PGOV PREL MD

SUBJECT: VORONIN PLEASED WITH BUSH'S SUPPORT OF MOLDOVAN SOVEREIGNTY

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Kirby met with President Voronin on April 2 to review the Bucharest NATO Summit, an Article 98 agreement, a Moldovan contingent to Iraq, and the resignation of the NATO Information and Documentation Center head. Voronin didn't lose this opportunity to reiterate Moldova's current and future orientation toward the EU and desire to become an EU member. Voronin was in a good mood, commenting jovially and proudly about the new female members of his Cabinet and reminiscing about the warm interactions he had with Romanian officials during Soviet times. End summary.

¶2. (C) Voronin was very pleased with President Bush's public words about U.S. support for Moldovan sovereignty, territorial integrity and resolution of the Transnistrian conflict via 5+2 talks. Voronin said Bush's words were a welcome "unprecedented declaration." He wondered what Romanian President Basescu's reaction would be to them, implying that the Romanians should understand that Moldova would remain independent and not become a part of Romania. The Ambassador underscored USG support for a Moldova-Romania border agreement as an additional sign that the two countries existed as separate states. Voronin hoped the EU, too, would support such an agreement. He stressed that Moldova needed a follow-on agreement with the EU to replace the current EU-Moldova Action Plan which is expiring, to give Moldova some perspective for future membership. "We don't need a specific timeline for joining the EU, but give us some possibility for membership," he said.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador raised the progress we are making towards agreeing on a text of an Article 98 agreement between the U.S. and Moldova and urged a signing of the agreement. He also asked about the perspectives for a Moldovan contingent to Iraq. Voronin asked for U.S. understanding while Moldova waited for the EU's assessment of the Action Plan. After the EU signed a new agreement with Moldova, no obstacles would remain, the President stated. The President believed signing an Article 98 agreement with the U.S. now could be a "knock-out punch" to Moldova's hopes for the next formal agreement with the EU. Regarding the Iraq contingent, the President noted that the decision was now in Parliament and asked an aide to check on parliamentary deliberations.

¶4. (C) Other details: Voronin noted that the new executive committee chosen at the March Communist Party Congress was composed mostly of officials born in the 1960s. His generation born in the 1940s should make way for the younger, more energetic members of the Communist Party (PCRM), he stated. He was very proud of the new female members of his Cabinet, pointing out that Prime Minister Greceanii was the first woman in that position in the entire history of Moldova. He also was pleased that, in comparison to 2001 when the PCRM first composed a government, this time he had many more candidates among which to choose the Prime Minister and other ministers.

¶5. (C) Comment: Voronin looked good. He had good color in his face; he didn't look tired as he has in meetings the past few months. He was engaged, focused, energetic and spoke more distinctly than during recent past meetings. Voronin seemed genuinely pleased with the

Ambassador's update on North Carolina private-American activities (dental clinics and women's soccer coaching). Voronin conserves an affinity for the struggles of average Moldovans. He also commented that he had no "phobias" against Romanians. Perhaps the problem was just that the Romanians lacked self-confidence, he speculated.

Kirby